

REMARKS

The present application has been carefully studied and amended in view of the outstanding Office Action dated April 5, 2007, and reconsideration of that Action is requested in view of the following comments.

A petition for a two-month extension of time accompanies this response together with the appropriate fee. Accordingly, the deadline for responding to the Office Action has been extended until September 5, 2007, and this response is therefore timely filed since it was deposited in the mail for First Class Delivery Service on the date certified on the front page hereof.

Applicant respectfully traverses the restriction requirement between the fixture of claims 1-22 and 26-36 and the method of claims 12-25 and 37-42 primarily because the subject matter of all of the claims is generally related and examination should be provided in a single application. Moreover, it is believed that similar issues must be addressed in determining the patentability of the recited fixture and the recited method steps. Additionally, the fields of search are similar and overlapping. Discretion is available to Examiners in matters of restriction, and it is respectfully requested that such discretion be exercised in the withdrawal of the restriction requirement.

In summary, it is specifically requested that the restriction requirement be withdrawn. However, in view of the Rules of Practice, applicant elects the fixture of Group I and finds present claims 1, 3-11, 26 and 28-36 readable thereon. This election is in accordance with the provisional election made with traverse by the undersigned counsel on March 22, 2007.

Claims 1 and 26 have been amended to include the limitations of dependent claims 2 and 27, and the latter claims have been canceled. Additionally, claims 1 and 26 have been amended to specifically recite that the gasket or thin film is detachably mounted to the recited plate without purposely tensioning the gasket or thin film after such mounting to the plate. These limitations distinguish claims 1 and 26 from the applied prior art, specifically Barringer et al. US 5,891,295 ("Barringer").

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 26, as amended, are not anticipated or rendered obvious by the Barringer reference. Also, the remaining claims being examined in this application depend from claim 1 or claim 26 either directly or indirectly, and these dependent claims are not rendered obvious by Barringer for the reasons discussed below.

Figure 1 of Barringer is representative of the overall Barringer disclosure where a flexible sheet material 12 is placed on the surface 40 of tensioning member 16, as well as the surface 42 of tensioning member 24. Also the flexible sheet material 12 rests on the surface 44 of frame 14. Adherence of the flexible sheet material 12 to these surfaces is achieved by a tacky coating. It is significant that elastomeric pads 18, 26 slide along surfaces 20, 28 of frame member 14 in inward directions 22, 30 as well as outward directions to thereby purposely tension the flexible sheet material 12 after mounting on the frame. Unlike the present invention recited in the amended claims herein the sheet material 12 is purposely tensioned after mounting by the above described movable portions of the frame.

Clearly claims 1 and 26 are not anticipated by Barringer, first because the subject matter of claim 2 is now incorporated in claim 1 and the subject matter of claim 27 is


now incorporated in claim 26, and second because these independent claim positively recite that the gasket or thin film is detachably mounted to the plate without purposely tensioning the gasket or thin film after such mounting. Elimination of the tensioning by Barringer would be an improper conclusion to reach because there is no suggestion to do so and also because such elimination would entirely destroy the essence of the fixture discussed and illustrated throughout the Barringer disclosure.

Dependent claims 3-11 and 28-36 are not rendered obvious by Barringer for the same reasons discussed above in distinguishing the independent claims from Barringer. These dependent claims define other features of the invention not suggested by Barringer

Accordingly, for these reasons it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance and early notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Dated: September 5, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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